

shot rivulets thru the crusty snow,
the whole pond scarlet with Margie's blood
& me to blame.

Arlene was always smiling,
grew up to run away
with a cowboy
from the rodeo,
gave up the church
& said everything was
shit.

A family of misfits,
no one to lean on
not even each other,
dying in Brooklyn
& in silence,
a terror in their eyes
that no one cared enough
to see.

I Do Protest

Like time in the vice
Of man's ingenuity
And stars reduced
To chemics,
I protest.

I weep the rage of childless mothers,
Impatient to be full,
And I inhabit the focal point
Of sadness.

I protest the human mind
And I fear the loneliness of constellations.

The wind blows mellow and fog-grey
Through my limbo.

Cheyenne Friend

Bobby Bennett
was my best friend
we'd sneak out
at 2 a.m.
once his mother caught me
up against the hallway wall
we lived in what I guess
was a slum
a Cheyenne Mexican slum
a project
big blocks of building
with sandpaper walls.

Sleeping over
I worked a mouthful
of bubble gum
into Bobby's hair
so that his mother
took him for treatments
I'd sit in the warm sun
skipping rocks
& wait for their return
each time he had to go.

Bobby couldn't cope
they'd say now
once I set him up
for a fight with Barok
the skinniest bully
in the world
got him to say
he could beat Barok
in stomach boxing
had to praise his
hard stomach
to the moon
he only said it once
reluctantly
Barok & all his friends
sprang out of hiding
sprang out of nowhere
& Barok knocked all the wind
out of my best friend.

There was Cub Scouts
& run away
movies & bikes
but always Bobby
got the short end
of the stick.

I don't know why
we were friends.
I guess because
we had the same
last name.

-- John Bennett

Redwood City, CA